

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JANUARY 29, 2008

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CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2007–08 REGULAR SESSION

## House Resolution

No. 24

### Introduced by Assembly Member Portantino

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January 16, 2008

House Resolution No. 24—Relative to Space Exploration Month.

1 WHEREAS, Fifty years ago, on January 31, 1958, the Explorer  
2 1 satellite launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida, aboard a  
3 Jupiter-C rocket. Although tiny by today's spacecraft standards,  
4 weighing merely 31 pounds, Explorer 1 sprang skyward, carrying  
5 with it the enormous hopes and dreams of a Cold War America,  
6 a country still reeling from the failure of its first Vanguard project  
7 the month before and the former Soviet Union's shocking launches  
8 of Sputnik 1 and 2 the previous fall; and  
9 WHEREAS, We now remember Explorer 1 both for its  
10 pioneering place in United States space history and its immediate

1 contributions to science by initially discovering the Van Allen  
2 Radiation Belts around Earth. These memories are particularly  
3 fond for the developers of Explorer 1, the people of NASA's Jet  
4 Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) at the California Institute of  
5 Technology in Pasadena, California, which at the time was under  
6 contract with the United States Army; and

7 WHEREAS, Following the launch of Sputnik 1 by the former  
8 Soviet Union on October 4, 1957, the United States Army Ballistic  
9 Missile Agency was directed to launch a satellite using its Jupiter-C  
10 rocket developed under the direction of Dr. Wernher von Braun.  
11 JPL received the assignment to design, build, and operate the  
12 artificial satellite that would serve as the rocket's payload, an  
13 assignment JPL completed in less than three months; and

14 WHEREAS, Within a remarkable 84 days, Dr. William  
15 Pickering, the Director of JPL, and his team worked with the  
16 United States Army Ballistic Missile Agency to develop the science  
17 package and communications system of Explorer 1, as well as the  
18 high-speed upper stages for the Jupiter-C rocket. This work would  
19 mark JPL's shift in emphasis from rockets to what sits on top of  
20 rockets; and

21 WHEREAS, Although Explorer 1 is gone, its impact on JPL  
22 was permanent. Never again would JPL be an obscure army facility  
23 laboring away on classified projects. Explorer 1 opened the door  
24 to space and, as a result, JPL would never be the same; and

25 WHEREAS, The years since 1959 have amounted to a golden  
26 age of solar system exploration. Advancements in rocketry after  
27 World War II enabled our machines to break the grip of Earth's  
28 gravity and travel to the moon and other planets; and

29 WHEREAS, The United States has sent automated spacecraft,  
30 followed by human-crewed expeditions, to explore the moon. In  
31 addition, our automated machines have orbited and landed on  
32 Venus and Mars, explored the sun's environment, observed comets  
33 and asteroids, and made close-range surveys while flying past  
34 Mercury, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune; and

35 WHEREAS, This exploration has produced a quantum leap in  
36 our knowledge and understanding of the solar system. The  
37 electronic sight and other senses of our automated spacecraft have  
38 allowed the discovery of previously unknown objects and have  
39 revealed color and complexion on worlds that for centuries

1 appeared to Earthbound eyes as fuzzy disks or indistinct points of  
2 light; and

3 WHEREAS, Future historians will likely view these pioneering  
4 flights, starting with Explorer 1, and other flights through the solar  
5 system as some of the most remarkable achievements of the 20th  
6 century; now, therefore, be it

7 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California*, That the  
8 Assembly recognizes the launch of Explorer 1 on January 31, 1958,  
9 as the beginning of the country's entry into space exploration and  
10 further recognizes the work of JPL in this launch and in the ongoing  
11 space exploration effort; and be it further

12 *Resolved*, That in recognition of Explorer 1, the efforts of JPL,  
13 and the importance of space exploration, the Assembly designates  
14 the month of January 2008 as Space Exploration Month; and be  
15 it further

16 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies  
17 of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution, and to  
18 JPL.